

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 7-16, and 19-24 are all the claims pending in the application. By this amendment, Applicants cancel claims 6 and 18.

I. Drawings:

At numbered paragraph 1 of the Office Action, the Examiner requires a “proper” drawing of Fig. 16, which was newly added to the application via the April 24, 2003 Amendment. A clean copy Fig. 16 is submitted together with this response.

II. Allowable Subject Matter:

At numbered paragraphs 22 and 23 of the Office Action, the Examiner allows claims 6 and indicates that 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants cancel these claims, without prejudice or disclaimer. The subject matter of claims 6 and 18 is respectively incorporated into independent claims 1 and 13.

III. Claim Rejections on Prior Art Grounds:

The Examiner rejects:

1. claims 1-4 and 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. 6,340,999 B1 to Masuda et al. (“Masuda”) in view of U.S. 6,108,059 to Yang (“Yang”);
2. claims 13, 14, 16 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. 5,046,826 to Iwamoto et al. (“Iwamoto”) in view of U.S. 5,461,547 to Ciupke et al. (“Ciupke”);
3. claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Iwamoto in view of Ciupke, and further in view of U.S. 5,341,231 to Yamamoto et al. (“Yamamoto”); and
4. claims 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Iwamoto in view of Ciupke, and further in view of Masuda.

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As stated above in section II, Applicants amend independent claims 1 and 13 by respectively incorporating the allowable subject matter recited in claims 6 and 18. Thus, independent claims 1 and 13 should be in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully submit that the all of the requested amendments should be entered because they (1) merely cancel claims (with respect to claims 6 and 18), and (2) should only require a cursory review by the Examiner (with respect to independent claims 1 and 13).¹

For these reasons, Applicants assert that claims 1 and 13 are patentable, and that claims 2-4, 7-12, 14-16, and 19-24 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

¹ MPEP 714.13.

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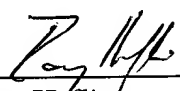
Respectfully submitted,

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FIG. 16

